

UNCLASSIFIED (U)

U.S. Department of State Foreign Affairs Manual Volume 3 Handbook 1
Personnel Operations Handbook

3 FAH-1 H-2650
FOREIGN SERVICE CONVERSION
PROGRAM—FOREIGN SERVICE SPECIALIST
TO GENERALIST, CIVIL SERVICE TO
FOREIGN SERVICE SPECIALIST OR
GENERALIST

*(CT:POH-153; 06-22-2012)
(Office of Origin: HR/CSHRM)*

3 FAH-1 H-2651 PURPOSE AND POLICY

3 FAH-1 H-2651.1 General

(TL: POH-49; 06-29-1998)

(State Only)

(Applies to Foreign Service and Civil Service Employees)

This program is intended for Department of State Foreign Service specialists and Civil Service employees who demonstrate the skills necessary to perform successfully in Foreign Service generalist or specialist positions. The program is designed to increase the Department's flexibility in managing its human resources by recruiting outstanding candidates to skill codes which are in deficit, or which require additional employees with specific abilities.

3 FAH-1 H-2651.2 Applicability

(TL: POH-49; 06-29-1998)

(State Only)

(Applies to Foreign Service and Civil Service Employees)

a. These regulations apply to the conversion of:

- (1) Foreign Service specialists to Foreign Service generalists skill codes at class FS-01 and below; and
- (2) Civil Service employees to Foreign Service generalist or specialist skill codes at class FS-01 and below.

b. Conversions above class FS-01, regardless of occupational category, are governed by 3 FAM 2217.

UNCLASSIFIED (U)

U.S. Department of State Foreign Affairs Manual Volume 3 Handbook 1
Personnel Operations Handbook

3 FAH-1 H-2652 CERTIFICATION OF NEED

(TL: POH-49; 06-29-1998)

(State Only)

(Applies to Foreign Service and Civil Service Employees)

Annually, the Director General of the Foreign Service will certify by skill code and class those generalist and specialist skill codes which are in long-term surplus and those in which there are projected deficits. These certified deficits may be met through this Conversion Program.

3 FAH-1 H-2653 SOURCE OF CANDIDATES

(TL: POH-49; 06-29-1998)

(State Only)

(Applies to Foreign Service and Civil Service Employees)

All candidates for conversion to Foreign Service generalist or specialist skill codes at class FS-01 or below, governed by this subchapter, are required to be tenured, career Foreign Service or Civil Service State Department employees of proven ability and high potential for advancement.

3 FAH-1 H-2654 OPEN SEASON FOR CONVERSION

(TL: POH-49; 06-29-1998)

(State Only)

(Applies to Foreign Service and Civil Service Employees)

- a. On an annual basis, the Department will establish an application period during which Foreign Service and Civil Service personnel who meet the eligibility requirements cited in this subchapter may apply on an equal basis for conversion to Foreign Service specialist or generalist skill codes.
- b. The administration of the Conversion Program shall be consistent with meeting the continuing, long-term requirement for personnel with a combination of professional experience, education, and skills to meet the long term projections of personnel flows and needs as mandated by section 601 (2) of the Foreign Service Act of 1980. Applicants will be accepted for the Conversion Program in cases where those needs cannot reasonably be met from within the ranks of career generalist and specialist Foreign Service personnel, either through special training of career personnel and/or limited appointments pending completion of such training.
- c. No appointment may be made to a class inconsistent with the projections of workforce needs at that class level.

UNCLASSIFIED (U)

U.S. Department of State Foreign Affairs Manual Volume 3 Handbook 1
Personnel Operations Handbook

3 FAH-1 H-2655 ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

3 FAH-1 H-2655.1 Service

(TL: POH-49; 06-29-1998)

(State Only)

(Applies to Foreign Service and Civil Service Employees)

- a. On the date of application, a candidate must be a tenured, career Foreign Service specialist or a tenured, career Civil Service employee and must have completed a minimum of seven years of creditable service with the United States Government, including at least four years of service during the last six years in Foreign Service positions abroad, graded at the FS-05 level or above, except that applicants who began a qualifying period of duty abroad after January 1, 1990, may be considered eligible for conversion through January 1, 1998. In skill codes and classes where the administrative promotion level is below FP-4, the Director General may authorize skill code conversion for qualified employees with four years of service during the last six years in Foreign Service positions abroad graded at the FS-07 level or above.
- b. Foreign Service candidates at class FS-01 must have six or more years of Single Time-in-Class (STIC—time in class at one grade level) and Cumulative Time-in-Class (CTIC—for generalists, from the time commissioned until promoted into the Senior Foreign Service; and for specialists, from time of tenuring until promoted into the Senior Foreign Service) remaining in the service prior to conversion.
- c. Civil Service personnel must apply early enough to meet the age requirement of 3 FAH-1 H-2655.3.

3 FAH-1 H-2655.2 Skill Determination

(TL: POH-49; 06-29-1998)

(State Only)

(Applies to Foreign Service and Civil Service Employees)

All candidates must meet eligibility criteria for skill code changes, pursuant to 3 FAH-1 H-2625.

3 FAH-1 H-2655.3 Age

(TL: POH-49; 06-29-1998)

(State Only)

(Applies to Foreign Service and Civil Service Employees)

All conversions shall be made before the candidate's 60th birthday. The maximum age for appointment under this program is based on the requirement that all candidates shall be able to complete at least two full tours of duty, exclusive of

UNCLASSIFIED (U)

U.S. Department of State Foreign Affairs Manual Volume 3 Handbook 1
Personnel Operations Handbook

orientation and training, before reaching the mandatory retirement age of 65 as prescribed by the Act.

3 FAH-1 H-2655.4 Security Clearance

(TL: POH-49; 06-29-1998)

(State Only)

(Applies to Foreign Service and Civil Service Employees)

Candidates must have a current Top Secret security clearance.

3 FAH-1 H-2655.5 Medical Clearance

(TL: POH-49; 06-29-1998)

(State Only)

(Applies to Foreign Service and Civil Service Employees)

Foreign Service and Civil Service candidates must meet the current medical clearance standards required by the Board of Examiners for new entrants to the Foreign Service.

3 FAH-1 H-2656 APPLICATION PROCESS

(TL: POH-49; 06-29-1998)

(State Only)

(Applies to Foreign Service and Civil Service Employees)

Personnel wishing to be considered for conversion must respond during the open season established under 3 FAH-1 H-2654 paragraph a and provide all information as required for Skill Code Conversions (3 FAH-1 H-2626):

- (1) Foreign Service specialists shall notify their Counseling and Assignments Officer (CAO) each year beginning in 1997; and
- (2) Civil Service personnel shall notify the designated Civil Service representative in PER/CDA specified in the open season announcement.

3 FAH-1 H-2657 CONVERSION APPOINTMENT PROCESS

3 FAH-1 H-2657.1 Skill Code Change Panel

(TL: POH-49; 06-29-1998)

(State Only)

(Applies to Foreign Service and Civil Service Employees)

- a. The Skill Code Change Panel (see 3 FAH-1 H-2627.2) will:

UNCLASSIFIED (U)

U.S. Department of State Foreign Affairs Manual Volume 3 Handbook 1
Personnel Operations Handbook

- (1) Determine whether the applicant has met the minimum eligibility requirements for both a skill code change (3 FAH-1 H-2620) and this conversion program.
- (2) Review all conversion candidates and rank order them by the skill code to which they aspire, according to skill code change procedures (3 FAH-1 H-2620). Specialist candidates requesting conversion to generalist skill codes and Civil Service personnel requesting conversion to either specialist or generalist skill codes, will be rank ordered only after the panel certifies that each candidate is eligible for this Conversion Program and meets all necessary conversion requirements.
- (3) Identify sufficient candidates, in rank order, to fill the certified deficits by skill code and class.
- (4) Determine the cut-off point on the rank order list below which candidates will not be continued in the conversion process due to insufficient conversion opportunities, as authorized by the Director General.
- (5) Identify applicants deemed ineligible for any reason under 3 FAH-1 H-2655, or for whom authorized conversion opportunities do not exist, and will notify them that they may reapply in subsequent open seasons.

b. The names of Foreign Service and Civil Service conversion candidates remaining on the final rank order lists for which conversion opportunities do exist, will be forwarded to PER/PE.

- (1) PER/PE will submit the names of those Foreign Service and Civil Service candidates requesting conversion to a generalist skill code to the first scheduled session of the Commissioning and Tenure Board. The names of Civil Service personnel requesting conversion to specialist skill code categories will be submitted to the first scheduled session of the Specialist Tenuring Board.
- (2) Applicants will normally be eligible for only one Commissioning and Tenure Board (CTB) or Specialist Tenure Board (STB) review. Those not approved for commissioning by the CTB or STB will remain in their current Foreign Service or Civil Service career status and will not be eligible to apply again for conversion. However, the CTB or STB may grant the applicant a second review in those cases where additional evaluative material is needed in order to judge potential. The additional review will take place one year after the initial review, unless the applicant and Department agree to a different schedule.

3 FAH-1 H-2657.2 The Commissioning and Tenure Board (Generalists)

*(TL: POH-49; 06-29-1998)
(State Only)*

UNCLASSIFIED (U)

U.S. Department of State Foreign Affairs Manual Volume 3 Handbook 1
Personnel Operations Handbook

(Applies to Foreign Service and Civil Service Employees)

For applicants for conversion to generalist skill codes, the Commissioning and Tenure Board (CTB) shall assess whether applicants have demonstrated the potential in the skill code category to serve effectively as Foreign Service officers over a normal career span, extending to and including class FS-1.

- (1) Applicants who are eligible under 3 FAH-1 H-2655 and placed on a rank order list under 3 FAH-1 H-2657.1 will be reviewed by the Commissioning and Tenure Board, pursuant to existing precepts and along with all other career candidates. The CTB will recommend candidates for commissioning as Foreign Service officers and will determine whether each candidate has satisfied all tenuring requirements.
- (2) Applicants who are recommended by the CTB for commissioning, and who have satisfied all tenuring requirements listed in 3 FAM 2246, including the foreign language proficiency requirement (see 3 FAM 2246.6 and section 3 FAH-1 H-2657.2) will be eligible for immediate commissioning as Foreign Service officers and conversion to the requested skill code (3 FAM 2246.6).
- (3) Foreign Service applicants recommended for commissioning but not meeting all tenuring requirements, will be given five years from the date of the CTB recommendation to satisfy those requirements, and will retain their specialist tenure status during the probation period.
- (4) Foreign Service specialists who were granted conditional tenure but who do not satisfy all tenuring requirements within five years will remain in their original skill code, and their candidacy in the program will be terminated.
- (5) Civil Service applicants recommended for commissioning but not meeting all tenuring requirements will be given a one year probationary period from the date of the CTB recommendation to satisfy those requirements. If necessary, the employee will exercise his/her reemployment rights to a Civil Service position in accordance with the terms of his/her reemployment agreement. During this probationary period, the employee will have one year to complete all tenuring requirements.
- (6) Civil Service applicants who were granted conditional tenure but who do not satisfy all tenuring requirements within this one-year period will have their candidacy in the program terminated and will not be admitted again as candidates for the Conversion Program.

3 FAH-1 H-2657.3 The Specialist Tenuring Board

(TL: POH-49; 06-29-1998)

(State Only)

(Applies to Foreign Service and Civil Service Employees)

The Specialist Tenuring Board shall assess whether candidates for conversion to specialist skill code categories have demonstrated the potential, to serve

UNCLASSIFIED (U)

U.S. Department of State Foreign Affairs Manual Volume 3 Handbook 1
Personnel Operations Handbook

effectively in the new function over the normal career span, up to and including FP-01.

3 FAH-1 H-2657.4 Time-in-Class and Commissioning

(TL: POH-49; 06-29-1998)

(State Only)

(Applies to Foreign Service and Civil Service Employees)

The provisions of 3 FAM 2246 will be followed to establish time-in-class dates of employees newly converted at the mid-level.

3 FAH-1 H-2657.5 Skill Code and Grade Level of Appointment

(TL: POH-49; 06-29-1998)

(State Only)

(Applies to Foreign Service and Civil Service Employees)

- a. A successful Foreign Service specialist candidate for a generalist skill code conversion shall be administratively promoted to class FS-4 and commissioned as a career Foreign Service officer, except any employee who, at the time of application, is at a higher grade, shall be commissioned at that higher grade.
- b. A successful Civil Service candidate shall be converted to a Foreign Service class and salary comparable to the candidate's Civil Service grade and salary. Personnel converting to generalist skill codes will not be converted to a class of less than FS-4.

3 FAH-1 H-2658 AND H-2659 UNASSIGNED